

# Joint Task Force on California Watershed Management FACT SHEET

## ***What this report is...***

This report to the Legislature is required by 2000 legislation (AB2117 – Wayne). It primarily focuses on evaluating the existing cooperative relationship between California's natural resource agencies and local, collaborative watershed efforts. The Task Force is a joint effort between the Resources Agency and the State Water Resources Control Board.

To help with the evaluation, ten watershed case studies – local programs, groups, or projects – were selected by an open application process to obtain a variety of different watershed restoration experiences. Staff from the State Water Resources Control Board, the California Resources Agency, and UC Berkeley interviewed representatives of each case study. These four-hour interviews provided information about how and why watershed partnerships form, how they access funds and use science to guide decisions, how they prioritize projects, how they interface with agency field staff, and how effective they are in protecting watershed values. Data collected from the interviews will be used to form recommendations to the Legislature regarding State support (e.g., financial, technical) for these types of community-based, collaborative efforts.

The Resources Agency and the State Water Resources Control Board have formed the Joint Task Force on California Watershed Management to oversee this study and advise the agencies on the results and final report to the Legislature. The Resources Agency has also formed an interagency team comprised of state agencies with watershed management responsibilities within the Resources Agency to advise on this study.

## ***ADVISORY GROUPS***

*Joint Task Force on California Watershed Management members:* Department of Water Resources - Division of Planning and Local Assistance, California Forestry Association, Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA), Sacramento River Watershed Program, Inland Empire Utilities Agency, Sacramento Trust for Public Land, California Farm Bureau, Natural Resources Conservation Service, LA/San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council, California Environmental Protection Agency, FishNet 4C, CalFed, Sustainable Conservation, San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board, California Associations of Resource Conservation District

*Interagency Team:* The California Resources Agency, State Water Resources Control Board, California Department of Fire and Forestry, State Coastal Conservancy, Department of Water Resources, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, California Coastal Commission, Department of Fish and Game, Department of Conservation, Department of Parks and Recreation, Bay Conservation and Development Commission.

## **SELECTED WATERSHED PROJECTS / GROUPS / PROGRAMS** (NORTH TO SOUTH)

1. Humboldt Bay Watershed Action Plan and Enhancement Plan (Humboldt Co.)
2. Yuba Watershed Council (Nevada /Sierra/Yuba Co.)
3. Clear Lake Basin Watershed Management Project (Lake Co.)
4. Tomaes Bay/ Lagunitas Creek (Marin Co.)
5. Codornices Creek Watershed Restoration Action Plan (Alameda Co.)
6. Santa Clara Basin Watershed Management Initiative  
(Santa Clara /San Mateo / Alameda Co.)
7. Elkhorn Slough Watershed Permit Coordination Program (Monterey Co.)
8. Arroyo Seco Watershed Restoration Feasibility Study (Los Angeles Co.)
9. Santa Ana River Watershed Program (Orange/Riverside/San Bernardino Co.)
10. Los Peñasquitos Lagoon Enhancement Plan and Program (San Diego Co.)

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations were approved by the Task Force:

### ***Adopt Statewide Watershed Policy***

- Adopt a formal policy that it is in the State's interest to endorse local, collaborative watershed partnerships.
- State agencies involved in watershed management should evaluate and implement opportunities to reconfigure their programs and organizations using watershed management as an organizing principle for more efficient and effective delivery of existing programs.
- Establish a single set of overall principles, policies and flexible guidelines for watershed management.
- Promote participation by local governments (e.g. Cities and Counties) and special districts (e.g., RCDs, sewage, water, irrigation, fire districts) who are essential to implementation of watershed protection.

### ***Develop a Strategic Plan***

- Develop a "Strategic Plan for Watershed Management" in 2002, under the direction of the Resources Agency and the State Water Resources Control Board.

### ***Improve Technical Assistance and Communication***

- Develop manuals that define minimum levels of science needed for acceptable watershed assessments, watershed plans, and monitoring activities.

- Make it a priority to participate in and provide technical assistance for watershed management partnerships.
- Directly support regional or sub-regional forums for multiple watershed efforts, or large scale basin efforts in order to effectively communicate and encourage larger scale planning.
- Provide easy public access to watershed programs in the various departments.
- Establish or co-sponsor core training courses for watershed partnerships in which department personnel and/or non-governmental organizations provide the instruction.
- Coordinate regional workshops on available watershed management grant programs as frequently as annually for potential grant applicants that are tailored to each region.

#### ***Clarify Link to Regulations***

- Proactively coordinate regulatory processes (e.g., TMDLs) and schedules in watersheds where local voluntary partnerships are underway.

#### ***Leverage Multiple Funding Sources and Provide for Long-term Funding***

- Encourage partnerships to seek and leverage diverse funding sources (i.e., federal, local, private) and not depend solely on state grants for funding.
- Provide State funding to support local watershed partnership efforts a sufficient period of time to insure success.
- Address the largest funding gaps for watershed partnerships: operational support and monitoring.
- Further coordinate delivery of their programs to accomplish goals specified in this report.

#### ***Ensure Watershed Partnerships have access to science and monitoring***

- Support applied scientific and technical studies by watershed areas to improve understanding of watershed function and restoration processes (i.e. hydrology and geology studies).

#### ***Ensure Public Accountability***

- Provide accountability measures for recipients of current or future State funding for local watershed efforts.
- Funding should be awarded to voluntary watershed restoration and enhancement projects that use principles and guidelines or watershed assessments developed by the State where these are available.

### **For more information, please contact:**

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